

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY

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Stay Informed

Check the project webpage (see link below) for meeting announcements, material for review and to provide input.

Provide Updates

Let everyone know what is happening with your projects and activities that pertain to the RTS. Send us the information, including scheduled meetings, and we will include it in the next Communiqué.

Sign Up for e-mail notifications; use the form on the webpage.

Next Steps

Consultant team will review and incorporate input and information from first working session.

A future working session will discuss additional analysis and findings, including those that specifically relate to inter-county travel and service gaps.

Consider forming working groups in the following areas:

- Public transit
- IT
- Ridesharing

The study team is evaluating a range of public meeting processes, including virtual meeting techniques to maximize outreach potential.

Communiqué, Issue #2

July 2012

Client Committee working session clarifies priorities, brainstorms possible solutions



Members of the Client Committee met in Ithaca on June 20 for a three hour working session to review work completed for the Regional Transportation Study and identify and prioritize regional transportation needs.

The first part of the meeting focused on work completed by the consultant team to date. The team has conducted a range of onsite stakeholder and small group meetings to establish a communication framework and to gain local knowledge of the project area. They have touched base with at least one organization or agency in each of the counties in the study area. Their familiarity with ongoing projects and initiatives at the local level will inform development of a framework to support regional transportation and mobility enhancements.

The team has collected, reviewed, and initiated an analysis of demographic, socio-economic, journey to work, and transit information, which they shared with the group.

To inform project partners about the individual ongoing projects and promote regional communication about the schedule, activities, and deliverables from the RTS, the team published its first Client Communiqué. Content for this bi-monthly e-newsletter features updates provided by committee members.

Wendel Project Manager Marlene Connor reviewed study goals outlined by Client Committee members and led a brainstorming exercise to address key questions. All responses were recorded and participants were asked to identify the highest priority answers. The questions and highest priority answers are listed below. The full list of the responses is included in the meeting summary on the project website.

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Meetings in the Study Area:

Seven Valleys Health Coalition

July 31 – Regional Mobility
Managers meeting at Hope Lake
Lodge

Contact Us

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1. What are client/ customer trip needs?

- Employment
- Expansion of system/services
- Cross-county trips
- Tourism
- Aging population including medical
- Social/quality of life

2. What is family of services to meet needs?

- Transit connectivity
- Volunteer system/network
- Fixed route/demand response connections
- Rideshare

3. How does availability of services get communicated?

- Regional call center
- Communication (operator-operator and operator-user)
Mobility managers website links or even a single site
- One-stop-shop (transportation broker)
- 511 and 211

4. How do providers of services collaborate?

- Specific projects will help identify players
- Create a “virtual single system”
- Communicate on a data level (211 or 511)
- Get rid of silos
- Human services agencies need to know each other

5. What would be the components of the system?

- Business models to connect services
- Break away from county barriers
- 211 would connect directly to provider
- Simplified communication/collaboration
- Governance
- Incentives



Project Updates:

- **TCAT** was profiled in the June 4, 2012 issue of *Metro Magazine*: “U. Transit Profile: Ithaca, N.Y. transit manages needs of 3 campuses, community”. The full story is included in this issue of the *Communiqué* and can be found online:



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www.metro-magazine.com/News/Story/2012/06/TCAT-manages-needs-of-3-campuses-community.aspx

- **Cortland** The first phase of the Cortland transit study is nearing completion. The second phase hosted by the Community Transportation Association of America, CTAA, is scheduled to begin with a public forum/listening session at the end of September or beginning of October. The date has not been set yet.

Cortland has also branded its Mobility Management process as Way2Go Cortland, the website at www.way2gocortland.org

- **The Arc of Schuyler County** received additional funding for their Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative (VTCLI) Grant to conduct planning, outreach and marketing of their one-call/one-click center in coordination with Veterans service organizations to improve access to transportation information for veterans, service members and their families. Dwight Mengel, of Tompkins DSS, was invited to speak to the Coordinated Transportation Committee, "to share and inspire our committee members to start thinking about *all* the options that may be available for transportation between counties and specifically between Tompkins and Schuyler." A sub-committee is working on funding to coordinate and schedule volunteers as well as assist with reserving rides for the Dial-A-Ride and transit services. The group has a solution and is working to finalize funding sources.
- **In Tompkins County**, ITNEverywhere is a research project of ITNAmerica to evaluate how to organize and deliver mobility services in small urban and rural communities. The primary goal of ITNEverywhere is to develop a suite of transportation software programs to meet the needs of individual communities. The idea is to compliment current public transportation systems, as well as other community transportation resources.

The project is scheduled to conclude in October 2012. The market research phase was completed when the community survey closed on July 21. Other activities included interviews with potential volunteers and users, stakeholder interviews with agencies and organizations, focus group sessions, and working meetings with the Tompkins County working group and steering committee. The next step is for ITNAmerica staff to prepare a landscape analysis report for Tompkins County which will distill the information gathered to be published in a public report in October.



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ITNEverywhere is a collaboration of ITNAmerica, Tompkins County, GADABOUT (paratransit operator), Way2Go (Cornell Cooperative Extension), 211 Tompkins/Cortland, Department of Social Services, Office for the Aging, Ithaca Carshare, Ithaca Tompkins-County Transportation Council, FISH, George Corp, and Finger Lakes Independence Center. The working group included the above agencies and representatives of TCAT (Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit) and the Ithaca Central School District. Chrisophia Somerfeldt, Way2Go, is the local Project Manager, 607-272-2292.

211 Individual Trip Plan Database Project In every community there are case managers and discharge planners who create individual trip plans for people, usually under pressure of a short time period. A significant share of those trips present challenges based on location, time, availability of options, and individual circumstances. The purpose of the 211 individual trip plan database is to create a central repository for trip plans which can be accessed by case managers and the public, to collect insights about how local mobility services can be improved and better coordinated, and provide the ability to crowdsource difficult trip plans.

This mobility management project will enable the wisdom and insights of case managers to be collected and shared. Trip plans are customized to individual circumstances. All available options are considered, including delivering a service to the customer, instead of requiring the customer to travel to the service.

211 Tompkins/Cortland, operated by the Tompkins County Human Services Coalition, is leading the project team which includes the Department of Social Services, Office for the Aging, Way2Go, and FISH. While the database is being developed a Google Group will be created for case managers to use to crowdsource trip plan requests. The Project Manager is Ed Swayze, 211 Tompkins/Cortland, 607-273-3010 x226).

Also in **Tompkins County**: The primary focus by the Tompkins County Coordinated Transportation Plan Committee from April to July was the solicitation of project proposals in anticipation of 2012 JARC and New Freedom funding. We are in the evaluation phase which the committee will complete in its August meeting. Another important project being completed is the impending delivery of the wheelchair accessible MV-1 taxi vehicle purchased with New Freedom funds. News about Tompkins County's coordinated planning is found on the website:

www.tccoordinatedplan.weebly.com Contact person is Dwight Mengel, Tompkins County Dept. of Social Services, 607-274-5605.

An aerial photograph of the Ithaca, New York area, showing roads, green spaces, and urban development. A semi-transparent banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title and county names.

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Tompkins County, in partnership with TCAT, the City of Ithaca, Cornell University and the Downtown Ithaca Alliance, received a grant award of \$4.5 million dollars under the State of Good Repair program to rehabilitate and repair the Commons Transportation Hub and improve existing bus transit service, commuting times, and provide more reliable service as part of the Accelerating Community Access (ITHACA) project.

- **New York State** through **NYSERDA** has initiated a regional process that may have some applicability for some of the counties in the study area. The info on that can be accessed at www.CleanerGreenerSouthernTier.org The process includes a transportation component and potentially could be used to fund new ideas generated through the RTS.

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June 4, 2012

Industry News

U. Transit Profile: Ithaca, N.Y. transit manages needs of 3 campuses, community

Based in the scenic Finger Lakes region in upstate New York, [Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit](#) (TCAT) is known for being a “small town bus system that provides big city service,” according to Patty Poist, communications and marketing manager for TCAT.



TCAT operates 34 routes using a fleet of 55 buses, including eight electric diesel hybrid buses. The system originates from three systems operated by the City of Ithaca, Tompkins County and [Cornell University](#), with each stemming as far back as far as a half of a century.

“Leaders from all three systems recognized the inherent inefficiencies of having separate services, and in the early 1990s, began the consolidation process,” said Poist. “In January 2005, TCAT was reorganized as a private not-for-profit corporation with three individuals recommended each the city, county and Cornell to serve on its board of directors. The three entities provide equal local funding — about \$830,000 each — to TCAT’s annual \$13 million budget, which is also supported by state and federal funds.”

In 2011, TCAT completed its fifth straight year of ridership growth with 10.3% more boardings than 2010, with a total of 3,944,625 trips. Year to date, the system’s ridership numbers continue to grow in 2012, showing a 4.6% increase as of April. The system serves a semi-rural population of a little more than 100,000 in Tompkins County, which is home to Cornell University (CU), Ithaca College (IC) and Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3.)

“We not only gain from ridership but from the wealth of talent from operating in a region with three outstanding institutions of higher learning,” said Joe Turcotte, GM at TCAT. “We have excellent representation on our board of directors from the university. We have been blessed with top-notch student interns, one, now a Cornell graduate, who became our service development manager, Doug Swarts, and another Cornell graduate, who was

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formerly our analyst. TCAT does not suffer from brain drain as do other smaller communities.”

The system has unique partnerships with each of its campus communities, according to Poist:



Cornell University:

In addition to it being a local funder, Cornell has a volume discount plan with TCAT, purchasing about \$2.5 million worth of rides per year. The Cornell community accounts for 70% of TCAT's ridership (2,725,731). All registered Cornell students, faculty and employees receive free unlimited rides on all buses after 6:00 p.m. and on weekends. The university's photo ID card is the fare medium and must be presented at the fare box and read electronically. In addition, for students who want more privileges, Cornell sells OmniRides passes loaded right on to students ID cards. The passes cost \$125 per semester and \$200 a year. Cornell provides free OmniRide privileges to new to Cornell students matriculating for the first time. Students who purchase parking lot passes for the peripheral parking lots farther out on campus automatically receive OmniRide privileges at no additional fee. Faculty and staff who do not purchase a parking pass are given free OmniRide passes.

Ithaca College: As a result of TCAT's new electronic, next generation fare collection system — RideLogic — that was implemented in January of 2010, TCAT worked with Ithaca College to design passes specifically for its students. IC subsidizes these passes. They are loaded right onto the students' ID cards. Ithaca College annual ridership amounts to 114,502. Since the inception of this new system in 2010, Ithaca College ridership has increased 79.9% from 1.9% of total system ridership to 2.9% of total system ridership.

Tompkins County Cortland Community College: As a result of the new fare collection system, TCAT in 2010 teamed up with Tompkins Cortland Community College. TC3's Faculty Student Association subsidize passes for its students, which are also loaded onto their student IDs, to include basic passes — two routes that serve TC3 — and unlimited use of the entire TCAT system. In just one year, TC3's use jumped 71%, making up 0.4% of all TCAT rides.

“Cornell itself puts a huge effort [into] travel demand management; limiting parking on campus and dissuading the use of vehicles on campus with high parking fees. Cornell also subsidizes passes, which is of course, an added incentive,” said Joe Turcotte, GM at TCAT. “Our relationship is symbiotic in that Cornell gives us the riders, and we give Cornell a way to curb traffic



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congestion and reduce the high cost of building and maintaining parking lots.”

Although each campus community and the services TCAT provides differ, the challenge is somewhat universal, explained Swarts.

“University populations tend to be highly transient in nature. With so many people moving in and out and around town on an annual or more frequent basis, we are constantly reassessing our assumptions about how much service is needed and where,” he said.

At the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year, Swarts worked with IC on a pilot project to offer more late night service to students traveling between the commons in downtown Ithaca and campus. The enhanced schedule provided service every half hour as opposed to every hour from Ithaca Commons to Ithaca College between 9:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m., Thursdays and Fridays, and 11:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m., on Saturdays.

“Transportation researchers have measured on average that for every 100 percent increase in service yields a 50 percent increase in ridership,” Swarts said. “We blew that right out of the water. Overall, our ridership increase was closer to 100 percent and on some trips it was off the charts with ridership jumping eight fold from what we saw the year before.”

Swarts said the pilot has demonstrated its success and hopes that Ithaca College will continue the partnership with TCAT going forward.

“This just goes to show that there is latent demand for affordable transportation in our community and, when we provide attractive service, the riders come out of the woodwork,” Swarts said.